

INTRODUCTION

IN 1679, THE YEAR BEFORE HE DIED, ATHANASIUS KIRCHER PUBLISHED *Turris Babel*, an account of the famous tower well known from the Old Testament as a symbol of humanity's hubris. As an introduction to his discourse on the tower itself, Kircher outlines the trajectory of a history of architecture, and like many such histories of the period, it starts with the so-called Seven Wonders of the World. By the seventeenth century, the seven wonders amounted to a fairly standard list of buildings of Mesopotamia and the Hellenic world. It is unusual therefore that Kircher includes a Roman monument, but it is wholly unprecedented that the one he includes is neither the famous Colosseum nor the Temple of Jupiter on the Capitol, but the little-known Theater of Marcus Scaurus.¹ The theater, according to Pliny the Elder, had 360 columns, thousands of statues, and many other spectacular features. Kircher – the Pliny of his own days – most surely identified with the ancient author's rebuke of Marcus Scaurus's extravagance: "For why did not the authorities stop his mad building project," asks Pliny. "How do vices infiltrate other than through official channels? How else have ivory, gold, and precious stones come to be used by private persons? Have we left anything wholly to the gods?" (36.5).² That costly and magnificent structures defy the divine was abundantly clear to Kircher and the Christians. Excessive building, whether in Babylon or Rome, met with certain destruction by an omnipotent God. That is why the most important feature of Scaurus's spectacular theater was that it no longer existed. Its exemplary extinction secured it a place in Kircher's moral tale. The theater illustrates an architectural history where Christian faith offers the firmest foundation, where modest monuments endure longer than majestic ones, and where immaterial visions hold stronger than solids. What makes buildings stand and why they fall down – remnants of a Renaissance discourse – were questions asked with a new urgency. Every building, right down to the beginning of history, was detained and tried at the court of Christian antiquarians. How Roman monuments were sentenced is this book's query.

The following chapters look at antiquity through the binoculars of the seventeenth century. Ancient Rome in the view of Giacomo Lauro, publishing at the beginning of the century, and of Athanasius Kircher, publishing toward its end, was populated by a classical architecture that to us does not seem

classical at all, but extravagantly Baroque. One epoch layered on another offers no direct, transparent view of the ancient past, but one that is refracted by a period and a culture that saw differently. It is not *our* antiquity we shall revisit, but *theirs* we shall explore. In a historical landscape twice removed, monuments we think we know appear unrecognizable, and others, of which we were not aware, stand out in strangely familiar forms. What reaches us through these superimposed pasts is an image of antiquity doubly distorted, but only half acknowledged.

Because many seventeenth-century reconstructions so artfully defy common knowledge on the remains at the time, the question is on what basis they convey antiquity. Analyzing the elements of conjecture in the archaeological visions of Lauro and Kircher enables new levels of meaning to appear: Instead of being testimonies of failed archaeology, they emerge as complex architectural *concetti*, amalgams of poignant references responding to moral, political, and religious issues in the seventeenth century. As the Roman Baroque period produced and reproduced its own version of the past, one quite distinct from the Renaissance version, ideal reconstructions provided architects with dazzling forms and suggestive connotations that pointed as much forward in time as backward.

The transformation of ruined Rome to a spectacularly depicted *urbs antiqua* in print explains the ancient city's continuing survival as a point of reference in discourses on history, theology, and architecture in a period that in many respects appears to have turned its back on the classical legacy. Although departing from known facts, illustrations of Rome in maps, popular guidebooks, and antiquarian compendiums recombined evidence from several fields into precise and meaningful evocations. From the woodcut illustrations of the classically built never-never-land of Francesco Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (1499) and Cesare Cesariano's illustrated edition of Vitruvius's *De Architectura* (1521), to Domenico Giuntalodi's majestically envisioned and beautifully articulated single-folio monuments from the 1530s and Sebastiano Serlio's virtuoso display of architectural projections of antiques in Book III of *L'Architettura* (1540), it was the graphically reproduced image that had reconstituted classical Rome and left a city not in marble, as Augustus famously once put it, but on copper. Gradually every brick of the real and imagined city was retraced and engraved, then printed, sold, copied, reprinted, and recopied in an ever-expanding fan of images. As a capital of print, Rome – once again – stretched out to the farthest corners of the continent, but this time pinned to the walls and placed on the bookshelves of a new pan-European audience of travelers and collectors. In maps, single folios, and illustrated books – through countless states and editions – the empire of the ancients was restored in black and white.³

The print industry did little to broaden insight on the remains. Almost on the contrary, it accelerated the demand for an instant archaeology, an antiquity

that would sell and that appeared striking, complete, and – somewhat paradoxically – up to date. The medium of print needed and created a past that was reproducible and simplified. Whereas the number of exceptional antiquarians like Pirro Ligorio and Onofrio Panvinio remained consistently low, those fulfilling other roles – engravers, printers, editors, and publishers – multiplied. The dissemination and gradual corruption of the printed image entailed not only a consequent diminution of quality, but even more dramatically, the focus on the actual site also waned. One encounters a situation where the basis for the prints is no longer the monuments, but previous prints. Rome *per se* turns into a genre.

That is why this book claims that the reconstruction of Rome in print was very much contingent on printmaking itself. An investigation into the history and conventions of graphic reproduction reveals an image of Rome forged by genres born in printmaking, such as emblems and frontispieces, and readjusted to accommodate religious and secular authorities, as well as patrons, collectors, tourists, and profit-hungry editors. The combination of factors results in engraved architecture that represents the ancient models not archaeologically, but didactically – with the mission to flatter, instruct, convert. Traits that at first glance seem fantastic appear after scrutiny as calculated moves responding to the obligations and restrictions imposed by the print industry itself. The politics of publishing – to summarize this seventeenth-century practice – intervened in antiquarian practice on matters of printing privileges, princely patronage, and papal propaganda. In all this it was not Rome that became less “ancient” but antiquity that instead reemerged in a new guise. Rome in print, in other words, was a very different Rome from the one that the conscientious draftsman would portray or indeed the archaeologist could vouch for: It was an ancient Rome that originated in the Baroque and that in the final instance contributes to give meaning to that troublesome term.

LAURO AND KIRCHER

The century that extends from Lauro’s composition of his first prints in the mid-1580s to Kircher’s death in 1680 corresponds roughly to the period that historians in art and architecture term the “Roman Baroque.”⁴ Although Lauro was still active as a printmaker when the young Jesuit arrived in Rome in 1633, nothing suggests that they met. In addition to the mere fact that their careers overlap, the main reason to write a book about both is that their respective studies on antiquity form a continuation methodologically and ideologically. In other words, their reconstructions combine in a development on their own, offering a veritable manual to the historiographies of prints, antiquarianism, and architecture – not to mention the idea of the Baroque

itself. Their reconstructions are complex, rich in references, and self-conscious of a print history that already at Lauro's time was more than a century old: Lauro transformed Roman types to an ideological vocabulary that would appeal to political and religious elites, whereas Kircher turned the entire legacy, including actual images borrowed from Lauro, into visually stunning allegories of patronage and theology.

The three books, or *libri*, of Giacomo Lauro's *Antiquae Urbis Splendor* were available on the market by 1615 and amount to a tour de force portrayal of Rome as he thought it looked at an unspecified point in time of its imperial heyday; they contain engraved and partly etched folios of nearly one hundred individual monuments accompanied by an explanatory text on folios that measure ca. 235 × 275 mm. Today dismissed as fantasies and largely overlooked as a source on ancient Rome, the series offered irresistible models for architects, antiquarians, painters, sculptors, and engravers in Italy and abroad for a century and half, going through several editions and countless imitations. The three Baroque architects Bernini, Borromini and Cortona, to whom I shall return, consulted and copied Lauro models for their own projects. So did the Austrian Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach and the Swedish court architect Nicodemus Tessin the Younger. The reconstructions also offered models for painters, engravers, and stucco workers, including Jean Lemaire, Giacinto Gimignani, and Domenico Barrière, and they influenced generations of authors and editors of antiquarian publications from Giovanni Maggi and Andrea Fei to Athanasius Kircher. In short, Lauro's printed reconstructions cast their spell on the Baroque visual imagination and offered the seventeenth century its "official" past: They therefore hold the key to unlocking the secret of the period's reinvention of Roman antiquity.

The small but significant literature on *Antiquae Urbis Splendor* tends to fall into two categories: The work is discussed in relation to printing and print history, or it is seen as a quarry of models for Baroque architecture. In a pioneering series of articles in *La Bibliofilia* published between 1927 and 1929 Thomas Ashby introduced the figure of Lauro to modern scholarship.⁵ Ashby no doubt was motivated by his acquisition of a manuscript containing letters to Lauro, neatly transcribed by Lauro himself and now preserved in the British School at Rome, and referred to in this book as Lauro's "Album Amicorum." Governed by a positivistic ideal, Ashby set himself the daunting task of giving order to Lauro's gigantic output of prints; therefore he naturally treated the *Antiquae Urbis Splendor* most summarily. Yet the English scholar held it to be the most arresting part of Lauro's legacy and was able to identify its patrons, publishers, and financiers. By comparing several copies he suggested there was a series of editions, thus establishing a publishing history that, although problematic, prevails today. Ashby even got as far as counting the number of folios contained in the work, but left it at that. What remained after Ashby,

therefore, was to account for the individual prints and their meaning and influence.

The other scholar to have written individual articles on Lauro is Daniela Del Pesco. She approached *Antiquae Urbis Splendor* from a different angle in three articles that have in common a focus on Lauro's reconstructions as prototypes for Baroque architecture. The most substantial article of the three appeared in 1984, investigating Lauro's prints as models for the projects of Bernini, Cortona, and Borromini. In 1985 a short paper was published on the same theme, but here Del Pesco importantly emphasized how a Christian rhetoric permeates the reconstructions, and in 2000 she published a detailed investigation into the connection between Borromini and his circle and Lauro.⁶ Evidently, Del Pesco went some way in the consideration of the individual buildings in Lauro's prints, an option left unexplored by Ashby. But so far they have not been discussed as what they truly represent, namely ancient monuments. It is Lauro's redefinition of Roman antiquity, even of the idea of history itself, that this book argues makes him a game changer in the Baroque period.

If the *Urbs Antiqua* of Lauro exists beyond the confines of archaeology, the question is where and when it did exist. In his most compelling designs Lauro maneuvered antiquities into a discourse that was decidedly contemporary, lifting Roman types out of an antiquarian discourse and into theological, moral, and political ones. These reconstructions, I shall argue, are no mere follies but rhetorical statements, masked as antiques, in the Catholic propaganda against infidels and heretics; in the dynastic aspiration of the Savoy and the Farnese to claim the position as heirs to the emperors; and in the rivalry between printmakers for the attention of sponsors to finance their publications. Reconstructions around 1600 took *sides*. To complete the series Lauro drew from a variety of sources that included printed maps, folios, emblem books, and texts from antiquity to 1600, as well as elements from architectural projects such as the basilica of S. Peter's, the Villa Borghese, and various palaces under construction across Europe. Evidence exclusively drawn from the antique, assembled by earlier generations of antiquarians, was simply not sufficiently compelling to engage the public of the new century. As I shall argue, for antiquity to continue to convince, and indeed to survive, it was necessary to select and recombine an amalgam of sources in a new meaningful whole. Allegory replaced archaeology in the mediation of Rome.

Athanasius Kircher's fame is stratospheric compared to Lauro, and the German Jesuit basks in the light of much scholarly attention.⁷ Books, exhibitions, and conferences in the last decades have established Kircher as the essential figure of the seventeenth century and as iconic in the attempts to capture the essence of the Baroque both as a concept and as a period. As Jesuit, polyhistor, and author of more than thirty books on a range of topics, always teetering on the tightrope between originality and the spectacularly erroneous,

Kircher has been a feast to explore for historians of various sciences, including geology, medicine, and metallurgy, as well as for experts in Egyptology, linguistic, and music, to mention a few. Kircher's research on Roman antiquity forms but a small part of his rich oeuvre and is confined mainly to the book *Latium* published in 1671. His reconstruction of monuments forms even a smaller part and boils down to a handful of examples. Only two villas in Tivoli are the subject here. Yet they fulfill the potential of the seventeenth-century reconstructive genre in two quite exceptionally ingenious displays of allusions that weave together ancient and contemporary references, mundane and religious concerns, in a densely packed allegory of the Jesuit antiquarian's own reality, and that are executed in specially commissioned and visually stunning graphic reproductions. The villa reconstructions – overlooked in scholarship – mark a highpoint in an appropriation of the past that might best be termed “Baroque.”

Although, as mentioned earlier, there is no evidence that Lauro and Kircher met, they connect on various points. On a basic level, their overlapping careers in Rome were rooted in the same milieu of publishers and collectors: The publishing house of Vitale Mascardi, for example, issued a late edition of *Antiquae Urbis Splendor* and also several works by Kircher in the 1650s, and Duke Ferdinand Albrecht Brunswick-Lüneburg, who acquired a copy of Lauro's book in 1663, corresponded with the Jesuit.⁸ In fact, Lauro and Kircher's respective relationships to their benefactors demonstrate an increasing professionalization: Whereas Lauro sought compensation from sponsors *after* he had printed the work, Kircher secured financing before he even started writing. From the perspective of patronage, then, the reconstruction of Roman monuments went from the readjusted to the entirely custom-made, from the dedication of single folios to whole volumes produced with a specific patron in mind. Lauro and Kircher demonstrate, in slightly different ways, that no such thing as an independent print antiquarian existed; independency had simply no place in the tight economic, social, and political structure that made the publication of this material possible at all.

Lauro and Kircher depended on identical antiquarian sources, notably Pirro Ligorio's manuscripts and publications; however, these were sources that, in a next step, both manipulated and recombined in order to connect antiquity to a grand providential history governed by the Christian God. For underneath the plethora of apparent evidence, the same conception of history permeates the argumentation of both Lauro and Kircher. The references that first Lauro and then Kircher make to Augustine's *City of God* and Cardinal Cesare Baronio's *Annales Ecclesiastici* were moral dictums that reminded readers of imperial Rome's unavoidable downfall, but admittedly also redeemed the guilty pleasure it was to reconstruct it, in a profession controlled by papal censorship. On an unprecedented level of erudition and eloquence Kircher completes Lauro's

reinvention of antiquity not only by literally copying his work but, more importantly, by also systematizing and perfecting the notion of history that lay under it.

By connecting Lauro's first attempts at a synthesis to Kircher's learning, this study ambitiously aims to define the particular view on architectural history at work in the Roman Baroque. This view evolved around a paradox: Divine providence governed history and also architectural history, so why had it allowed pagan Rome to exist? The revisions to the past needed in response to this question were a primary concern for Roman historians and antiquarians alike. Revelation, not excavation, seemed to have held the answer. Characteristically, Lauro includes as an introduction to his work an image of the prophecy of Daniel famously predicting the Roman Empire's overthrow. To a modern reader there is an obvious contradiction in flagging the collapse of ancient Rome in a book that after all is concerned with its reconstruction. Under the same auspices, when Kircher explains to a friend in a letter that his roaming around the countryside of Lazio was guided "not so much by human as by divine instinct", it says a great deal about the powers the Jesuit believed stood by him in his reorganization of the past.⁹ This study thus aims to insert in the history of antiquarianism that missing but essential stage I name "Baroque," which turned sites into signs and advanced ancient monuments – *ex eventu* – as vehicles for Christian truths. Already apparent with Lauro, the approach reaches a spectacular conclusion with Kircher. Where Lauro added the occasional forewarning of the advent of Christ, Kircher envelops antiquity as such in a narrative of Christian triumph. In short, this book investigates how Baroque Rome placed antiquity not so much in architectural history as in a theology that combined Jesuit missionary thinking with a neoplatonic theory of the origin of architecture.

From this perspective, Lauro's *Temple of Honor and Virtue* and *Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus*, discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, as well as Kircher's *Villa of Quintilius Varus*, analyzed in the last chapter, can be seen as theological exercises. Separating these two seventeenth-century scholars from the antiquarian circles of the Renaissance was the publication of Ignatius of Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises* in 1548. The founder of the Order of the Society of Jesus offered a momentarily influential but very simple manual for reaching religious enlightenment. Imagining scenes connected to Christ and biblical events, down to the level of architectural details, was fundamental in Loyola's instructions and paved the way for envisioning yonder places not in any objective way but as personally instructive examples. Apart from the fact that drawing these designs itself would be seen as an act of religious meditation, I believe that Loyola, as much as antiquarians like Pirro Ligorio, prompted the Christian rhetoric and eccentric solutions in many Baroque reconstructions. This is no mere speculation considering the fact that Lauro was helped out by the theologian André

Bayam in writing the texts to *Antiquae Urbis Splendor*. Bayam's contribution, as we see later, almost hijacked the enterprise to serve the Christian Catholic mission of conversion. Kircher was himself a Jesuit, obliged almost to advance the legacy of his society's founder, even when incising metal.

ANCIENT ROME'S THIN LINES

Prints, that cavalier definition, are in more precise terms mechanically produced images impressed on paper (or some other printable material) distinguished by the materials and methods of incision. Wood, copper, and copper layered with wax required different carving skills that commonly might be termed engraving. To identify the individual techniques behind engraved reconstructions is not always easy, nor is an aim in itself in this book, except for when the quality and nature of the incision may illuminate the architecture represented. Moreover, techniques were often used in combination and also in imitation of each other, in the manner in which flexible etching copycatted laborious, revered copper engraving. But most of all, incisions – of all kinds – imitated drawing.

Drawing and engraving are deceptively similar. The history of architectural drawing is not the subject of this book, but one point needs to be made. From the Renaissance onward drawing was a means not only to record ancient monuments but also to understand them. Filippo Brunelleschi, Ian Campbell points out, learned of Roman antiquities through drawing them, and in the grand collaborative project to reconstruct ancient Rome, sanctioned by Pope Leo X and headed by Raphael, the actual reconstruction hinged on the development of sophisticated projections.¹⁰ It is true that drawn motifs occasionally were corrupted in the process of being copied from one manuscript to the other, as Christopher S. Wood reminds us.¹¹ Yet, the draftsman could, if he willed, relate to the monument with an intimacy a printmaker never could attain – retracing the contours of actual solids.

Incising is also a form of delineation, but the reality it conveys is studio-made. The process of making an engraving boils down to metalworking and to a set of skills altogether different from the ones required to capture three dimensions convincingly. One never incises a monument “live” in the way the draftsman sketches his motifs on paper. But graphic techniques, too, in their own particular way, were used deliberately, if not rhetorically, to convey a specific image of ancient Rome: Girolamo Franzini's schematic woodcuts of architecture, for example, which illustrated his guidebooks to Rome from 1588 onward, have failed to impress scholars and connoisseurs (see Figs. 17 & 77).¹² Yet their artlessness might have been strategic: The almost exaggerated simplicity of the around forty reconstructed monuments arguably imitates the architectural representations found on ancient coins, which were a highly

esteemed source material at the time. Mimicking the technique of impressing images on metal would enhance the content's "authenticity" and the pretense that the monuments were copied from the antique.

Thirty years later, the startlingly impressionistic architectural views in Giovanni Maggi's *Aedificiorum et Ruinarum Romæ ex Antiquis atque Hodiernis Monumentis*, published in 1618, create the illusion that his imaginary reconstructions were rapidly sketched in situ observations of the kind a travelers' sketchbook would contain (see Figs. 20 & 38).¹³ To emphasize the connection, Maggi included in his views the image of tourists and artists shown precisely in the act of observing. Both Franzini and Maggi, some decades apart, appealed to visual paradigms dominant in their periods, which affected their very delineation. In broader terms, the shift from coins to artist's impression, as pictorial guarantors, indicates a culture moving away from the sixteenth-century cataloging of remnants to the seventeenth-century grand tour traveler's eyewitness aesthetics.

The rhetoric of the graphic techniques suggests that *style* is a conscious choice. Ignoring for a moment Lauro's shortcomings as a draftsman, his antiques are always recognizable, because the bold yet simple solutions manifest typologies of buildings more than individual archaeological sites. Temples, palaces, theaters, arches, villas become in Lauro's visual formulas "gestures" that the city – ancient and new – could add to its urban repertory. The use of *Antiquae Urbis Splendor* as a stylistic manual, an architectural book of manners, might explain its success across Europe. Representations of buildings that no longer exist are bound to build on conventions rather than on solids. For Lauro, moreover, reconstructing lost antiques meant reenvisioning them as "Christian" – a concern I think extended also to the style of depiction. Lauro's simplistic types suggest a conscious aim to steer away from a formal likeness to the monuments as signs, allowing for a deeper meaning – the iconography – to emerge. Thus, the departure from physical evidence, as well as from precise drawing, contributed to turn Rome into a new and fundamentally incised city.

A similar grading of the graphic expression pervades Kircher's books. The striking differences in quality displayed across his architectural illustrations, I shall contend, were always carefully calculated. The style of depiction, ranging from the rudimentary to the elaborate, tends to reflect the moral value of the architecture represented – an imperial palace and a saint's sanctuary invited different degrees of technical brilliance.

The architectural projections composed around the triad – *plan*, *elevation*, and *section-cut* – which had been developed by Renaissance architects and theorists, were part of the conventions of representations that passed from drawing to engraving. But whereas these conventions were absolutely essential in the draftsman's translation of a built structure into two dimensions, they served no such function in the process of printmaking. Lauro often copied

these perspectives as “quotations” of a structural analysis that he himself had no part in and in fact did not fully comprehend, but which placed his oeuvre in a proud tradition of the illustrated architectural treatise of the Renaissance. For Lauro, Kircher, and others it was therefore not a question of translating solids onto paper, but of imitating such translations. They produced architectural drawings – in perspective and elevation – even though the actual model had long vanished. Thus, the pictorial convention itself constituted the skeleton, the essence, of the built work, instead of offering a mere means to project it.

Moving from conventions to formats, the dimensions of the printed page were at times to blame for distorting antiques, and seventeenth-century publications can be seen to regroup Roman monuments in new “topographies” conditioned on book production itself. The often reduced (and sellable) book sizes, together with there being only a limited number of illustrations, forced printmakers to reassemble in a single image buildings that in previous publications had been illustrated individually. The architecture was clipped, distances reduced, and landscapes merged in urban views that book production invented. For example, Andrea Fei’s *Ritratto di Roma antica*, compiled by Pompilio Totti and published in 1627, rearranged, reduced, and foreshortened an already reconstructed past to accommodate the required pocket-sized format. Rome itself was refounded as visual fiction.

Still, the constrictions of the trade were not the only agents of change, and they were not even the most decisive ones. Prints, as opposed to drawing, were intended for wide distribution and were therefore also more suited for carrying messages to a broad audience in an age when religious propaganda from Rome peaked and publications became effective weapons in the showdown between Catholic and non-Catholic Europe. In addition, book production depended on financing from princely patrons, and Roman monuments were scrupulously reconstructed to look like palaces and villas that just had been or were about to be realized. Books and prints tricked sovereigns from Turin to Stockholm into believing they ruled their own *Roma antica*, which instead had been invented backstage by shrewd printmakers.

Technique, conventions, formats, as well as the obligations and restrictions of the publishing trade, recast the imperial capital on terms laid out not by remains, not even by drawing, but by their representation in print. In the final assessment engraving produced not an antiquity, but a non-antiquity, as carefully and deliberately constructed as the real city itself.

PRINT ANTIQUARIANISM

In *Antiquae Urbis Splendor* Lauro names the learned Guido Panciroli as one of his sources, and in 1612 Panciroli wrote, “Printing was the one universal language that taught how to preach to different nations the greatness of the

empires, the prudence of princes and the valour of captains.”¹⁴ The passage points to the unique status and the unprecedented autonomy that prints and printing enjoyed at the time Lauro published his work. The printed folio even forms a superior language, according to Panciroli, with the ability to convey the “grandeur of empires” and the “prudence of princes.” Panciroli’s emphasis on prints as a language goes beyond the mere reproductive and imitative aspect that seventeenth-century printmaking is met with in more recent scholarly evaluations.¹⁵

One senses from Panciroli’s enthusiasm that the engraved image – an obvious part of the language of print – was still a fresh and powerful medium around 1600. In fact, the reproducibility and dissemination of prints not only formed part of an emerging visual culture but also were largely responsible for it. A rapidly growing print industry certainly conveyed ancient buildings and, on a more profound level, also conditioned them. Architecture’s lost forms were reconfigured by the various strategies and mechanisms of the medium. This transformative power of the image and of the printed image in particular reverses the accustomed relationship between the model and the copy in the sense that it is suddenly the medium that makes reality real.

Although the impact of printmaking has been recognized since at least the eighteenth century, the discourse in this study ties to more recent literature.¹⁶ William Ivins, in *Prints and Visual Communication* (1953), lucidly described the effect that derived not from what a printed image represents but from its sheer technological constitution, from its characteristic as an “exactly repeatable pictorial statement.” Identical copies of an image established a new, firm ground – across disciplines – from which to pursue, compare, and systematize knowledge: “[I]t becomes obvious that without prints we should have very few of our modern sciences, technologies, archaeologies, or ethnologies – for all of these are dependent, first or last upon information conveyed by exactly repeatable visual or pictorial statements.”¹⁷

The paradigmatic potential of print turned into “a printing revolution” in the interpretation of Elizabeth Eisenstein in the monumental *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* (1979). The book presents a tapestry of investigations into the impact of printing on various fields, with a focus on the early modern period. It forms an explicit response to Marshall McLuhan’s *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (1962), which bombarded the reader with postulations in a “chaotic format,” according to Eisenstein, and theorized on the invention of printing as if it foremost was an *idea*.¹⁸ In *Understanding Media* (1964), however, a more tempered McLuhan clarifies important issues. A medium, he writes, is never a neutral vehicle for content, but changes it, or rather constitutes new content based on features that the medium itself consists of. He devotes a chapter to prints, recognizing their “repeatability” and visual appeal, which he thinks is far more seductive than the printed word. The idea worth bearing in mind,

however, is that forms of communication, such as prints, do not simply transmit information, but shape that information along the way – or, as he famously puts it, the medium is the message.

Of course, the idea that a technological innovation at all might intervene in the flux of time and change its course is itself a product of modernity and of the modern age's desire to seek out (and reinforce) the causes of its own (self-proclaimed) radical break with tradition – across all fields. The impact of print technology on early modern architecture has attracted a growing interest. Mario Carpo, for instance, reconsiders the importance of the illustrations in Sebastiano Serlio's architectural treatise published from the 1530s onward. After Serlio, Carpo argues, the question of realizing good architecture became a matter of copying from a page, rather than looking at buildings or reading Vitruvius. The technological breakthrough implied by mass-produced images fundamentally shaped the way of thinking about architecture. It reduced "architectural creation to the closed world of a catalogue of ready-made parts" and introduced a measure of standardization in architecture.¹⁹ Rose Marie San Juan shifts the focus to the seventeenth century: She sees the printed image as a constituent part of a new awareness of Rome, not of the ancient city but of Baroque Rome. She argues that engraving was a new "profoundly transformative technology" and that printing "reshaped everyday practices both by seeking to control them and by providing constructions and opportunities within which these practices were forged or reshaped." San Juan proposes a Foucault-like suppression and control of urban life by way of the seventeenth-century print in the way maps and guidebooks were used as instruments to govern the population.²⁰

Carpo and San Juan demonstrate how prints gained a momentum and an authority that somehow conditioned the perception and understanding of architecture. They offer valuable references, but only up to a certain point, because they trace the impact of prints on contemporary buildings, whereas the majority of buildings in this discussion no longer existed. What reconstructions do is to codify a vision of history. They display the past and the present in artful compromises. The influence of prints obviously goes beyond matters of technology and social politics and extends to the idea of history itself.

One can write about reconstructed Roman monuments from the standpoint of several histories – print, architecture, archaeology. The variety of possible perspectives is one reason why the history of antiquarianism might offer the firmest ground. Antiquarianism in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries differs from archaeology; it refers to a field devoted to the study and comparison of evidence from several branches of knowledge, evolving into what later might be identified with cultural history. The attempt to place prints within a history of antiquarianism requires careful maneuvering, for the history of that history is a very recent field of study and is still in the making. We are on virgin

grounds, as Peter N. Miller and François Louis make clear: “How, exactly, antiquaries and antiquarian learning are to be positioned within early modern intellectual life remains a real puzzle.”²¹

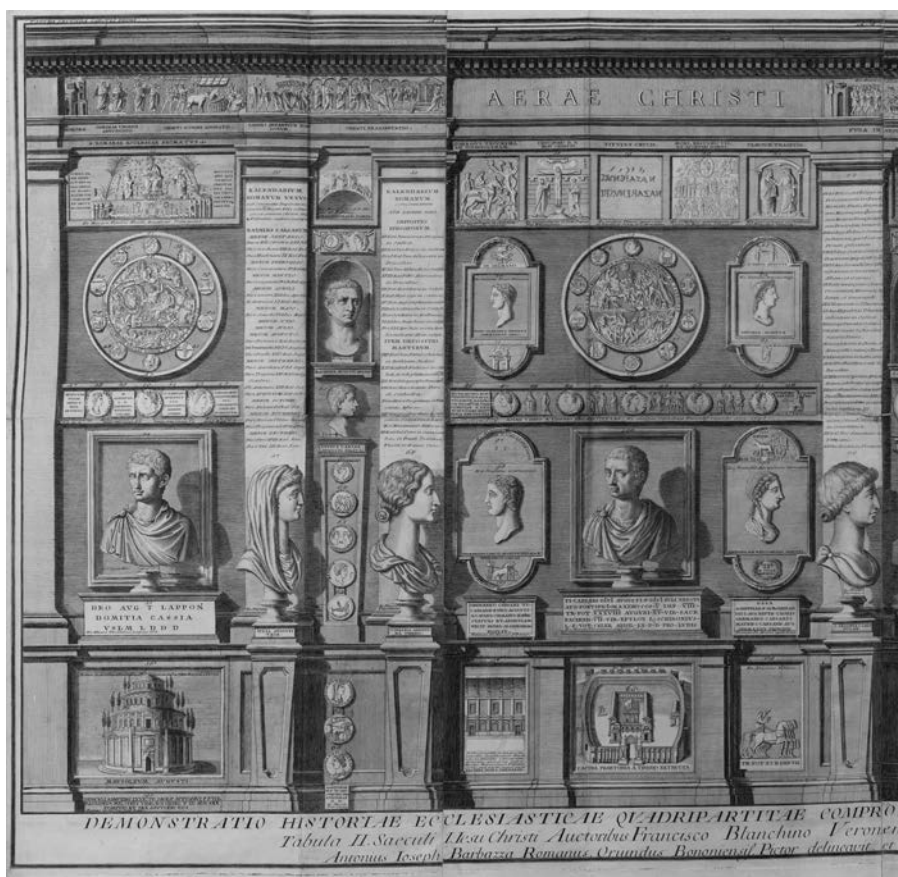
In general terms antiquarianism takes a broader view on the ancient world than archaeology, but a more tangible one than history. The actual material that antiquarians dealt with remains therefore an open category and unsorted. Arnaldo Momigliano’s pioneering “Ancient History and the Antiquarian,” published in 1950, identified antiquarianism as the study of nonliterary evidence as opposed to history, which was based on the study of literary evidence. To Momigliano, the sixteenth-century antiquarian was “a lover, collector and a student of ancient traditions and remains – though not a historian.” Carlo Sigonio, Fulvio Orsini, Antonio Agostini, and Justus Lipsius – followers of Flavio Biondo – incarnated the definition of the antiquarian “because they combined literary, archaeological, and epigraphical evidence, their preference being for literary and epigraphical texts. They slowly pieced together Roman chronology, topography, law, and religion.”²² Antiquarians, in Momigliano’s opinion, were sole custodians of the nonliterary past until the eighteenth century when the historian also began to regard marbles and monuments as evidence – no longer merely texts – and incorporated the rich domain of the antiquarian in the expanded, universal history that was in the making, while the systematic study of vestiges was reassigned to archaeology.

Criticism has been raised against what later scholarship has perceived as Momigliano’s too sharp distinction between history and antiquarianism. The actual practicing of these two fields tended to blend. Ingo Herklotz, for example, reminds us that both Flavio Biondo and Andrea Fulvio, two of Lauro’s sources, combined the discussion of objects with a clear sense of historical chronology derived from lists of emperors and other annals.²³ Seventeenth-century antiquarians like Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc and Cassiano dal Pozzo – acquaintances of Kircher – had been educated in civil law, which meant Roman law, and so acquired knowledge of history in that way. Philology, too, blurred the distinction between antiquarianism and history, exemplified by Ligorio’s manuscripts on the antiquities of Rome. Alessandro Alessandri, Sigonio, Agostini, and Lipsius, are also sources Lauro and Kircher relied on and who wrote brief tracts on ancient law and literature that helped bridge the gap “between the antiquary, who dealt with institutions, customs, and topography, and the historian, who was concerned with past events.”²⁴

The “nonliterary evidence” that Momigliano relegated to the antiquarian could of course have included prints, but Momigliano took no interest in graphic reproductions. And, indeed, prints occupy an ambiguous class. For, although they might depict a meticulously recorded material evidence of the past, prints themselves belonged to a contemporary world of books and folio representations. Illustrations veer between two realities: They form part

of one and represent another, and precisely therefore they were a means to overcome the gap between literary and nonliterary evidence. To pursue the idea a bit further, I do not think illustrations in the early modern period were considered as separate from text at all, but, on the contrary, as extensions of it, constituting a word-and-image union that *already* formed a separate class – both being mechanical reproductions born from the metal or wooden block. Hence the cropped and abbreviated monuments reconstructed in print might be viewed more favorably if compared to literary quotes from ancient authors where the passages varied in length, font, and spelling from one publication to the next.

By the end of the seventeenth century, the antiquarian print wielded a new authority, being both “the syntax and subject matter of a visual history,” according to Dana Arnold.²⁵ The status is evident, for example, not only in the institutionalization of printmaking during the reign of Louis XIV but also in the engravings themselves.²⁶ For what prints were prone to show were other prints contained within them, as *trompe-l’oeil* folios, in displays of a medium that had become utterly self-conscious. These incised double exposures prefigure to some extent the virtuoso solutions of Piranesi and Jean-Laurent-Pierre Houël that Susan Dixon names “the multi-informational image.”²⁷ However, the prints of, for example, Claude Perrault, Jan Goeree, and Francesco Bianchini are subtly different; they represented precise miniature versions of already published and well-known reconstructions. As the history of antiquarian prints became aware of itself, exhibiting the origin of its own genre as motifs, printed reconstructions came to rank alongside ancient statues and coins as testimonies of antiquity. Francesco van Aelst’s print of the Seven Wonders of the World, published in Rome in the 1580s, includes a representation of the already iconic engraving of the Colosseum by Girolamo Fagioli issued in 1538. In other words, it is not a copy of Fagioli’s print that van Aelst aims to produce, but a depiction of it, shown alongside other monuments in an overall imitation of folios hung on a brick wall. Prints of prints of Rome reveal self-consciously not only the function of graphic folios as collectibles but also the printmaker detachedly surveying and displaying the origin and history of his own medium in what amounts to a historiography of prints of Rome displayed in the graphic artist’s own terms. In Giuseppe Bianchini’s engraved fantasia of Rome from 1752 the point could not have been stated more clearly (Fig. 1). Prints of reconstructed Roman monuments originally published by Antonio Salamanca and Antonio Lafréry, but in Bianchini’s days already two hundred years old, are pictured adjacent to statues, medallions, calendars, and reliefs in a composition that illustrates antiquity. “Ex Pyrro Ligorio” it says in tiny letters on the re-engraved miniature of the Praetorian camp, which only the most observant will discover is not based on Ligorio’s 1553 original at all, but instead on Lauro’s adjusted copy.²⁸



1. Antonio Giuseppe Barbazza, *Demonstratio Historiae Ecclesiasticae Quadripartitae Comprobatae Monumentis Pertinentibus ad Fidem Temporum et Gestorum*. The Praetorian camp is at the lower right. Engraving based on a drawing probably by Giuseppe Bianchini (Rome, 1752), detail. Bibliothèque Nationale et Universitaire de Strasbourg.

Ancient Rome emerges through a double, if not a triple, layer of graphic reproduction. Prints, and not merely the monuments they show, are presented as ancient. So, in addition to representing antiquity, graphic images had themselves become antiques, forming part of a history that went back some 150 or even 200 years.

The seventeenth century considered prints “material evidence” to the extent that they showed things compiled and recorded by renowned antiquarians such as Ligorio and Panvinio. By the time Lauro published his compendium in 1615, and certainly by 1670 when Kircher distributed his *Latium*, the images they reproduced had a genealogy that reached back through numerous states and reprints to some original, “archaic” representation based on the actual remnant. Prints offered a route to antiquity that was far from direct, and perhaps also misguided, but was no less legitimate than republished ancient literature. A

passage from Vitruvius, transmitted through various editions and translations, was arguably no more representative of the past than an engraving of an ancient coin, relief, or monument. From the depths of graphic delineation's own reservoir, a shadow antiquity emerges, which the history of antiquarianism and the history of that history have largely ignored.

Reconstructing is a method that in itself combines literary and nonliterary evidence; it furnishes the monument with missing parts inspired from several disciplines – literature, emblems, architecture – to evoke a complete and meaningful image of the ancient past. Reconstructions – the complex notion that is repeatedly rephrased and problematized in the following chapters – obliterate Momigliano's distinctions between antiquarianism and history writing.

Lauro and Kircher explicitly combine, if not blend, Momigliano's distinctly separated traditions on terms that might be termed “Baroque,” as we shall see. References abound, on the one hand, to coins, marbles, and Ligorio's works for antiquarian knowledge, and, on the other, to ancient historians and historiographies such as Augustine's *City of God* for the outline of history. In fact, periodization as such is a major theme in Kircher's attempt to reconcile biblical and ancient chronologies.²⁹ It is safe to say that providence and *curiosa* amalgamate in the particular seventeenth-century vision that Lauro articulates and Kircher perfects in their roles as “print antiquarians” alongside others like Girolamo Franzini, Mario Cartaro, and Giovanni Maggi. The Rome they propagated in print obviously also has a place in the continuously edited history of antiquarianism.

The four case studies chosen for investigation in this book – two from Lauro's *Antiquae Urbis Splendor* and two from Kircher's *Latium* – represent print antiquarianism from different perspectives. Two introductory chapters tell first of the role of the print antiquarian and the making of the monuments in print, and, second, of the market for publications and the types of customers. Chapters 3–6 focus on one reconstruction each and study it as a prism reflecting the knowledge and imagination not only of the authors but also of their era. Chapter 3 on Lauro's *Temple of Honor and Virtue* draws the connection between antiquity and emblems, tracing the temple as a type in Baroque architecture, whereas Chapter 4 on the *Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus* looks at the Christian rhetoric permeating the reconstructions. The connotations in Kircher's two villa designs are more specific. In Chapter 5, the *Villa of Maecenas* invites a discussion of the ideal of patronage, and the patronage of the Barberini family in particular, whereas Chapter 6, which focuses on *The Villa of Quintilius Varus*, centers on the Nativity and Kircher's philosophy of history.

The perspective this book takes on Roman antiquity is broad indeed. And it might exceed an already extended definition of antiquarianism and thus be classified under what Peter N. Miller suggests antiquarianism evolved into – or indeed perhaps always was a part of – namely, cultural history.³⁰ Like the books of Lauro and Kircher this book, too, is an exercise in the art of combination.

SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY PASTS

Inevitably we think of the past as a stretch of time that precedes *now*. But the past is also an abstraction, like “heaven” and “soul,” holding a qualitative dimension, and consequently it describes more than it measures. “No account can recover the past as it was,” David Lowenthal observes, because the past was not an account; it was a set of events and situations.”³¹ In the seventeenth century the past was very much a present. Or rather, the era that Lauro and Kircher lived in, and felt they shared with the ancients, had not yet fully compartmentalized into epochs. History *leaked*, one might say, or time had not yet become periodized according to the schemes established firmly only in the nineteenth century. It is true that Renaissance humanists had become aware of the gulf separating their own age from that of the Romans. Typical of the Baroque, however, was that it would play with such an awareness, reuniting itself with a bygone epoch in artificial set-ups. The reciprocity might be fabricated, but it signaled nonetheless a longing for communion, for an innocence perhaps, which gave the act of reconstructing a particular urgency. It was never simply about restoring on paper appearances that had vanished: It was equally about rebuilding the contemporary world in a domain of yonder morals and meaning.

Admirable studies have been written on the history of the idea of the past, but the past in the seventeenth century is curiously absent from them.³² Antiquity is a concern that seems to have passed directly from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment, leaving us wondering where it was in the meantime. So, is there such a thing as a particularly Baroque vision of the past? Is there a distinct version of it that Lauro and Kircher entertained? The questions involve the idea and meaning of both time and history as these notions would have been conceived by a seventeenth-century antiquarian. What form did Roman antiquity have and *where* did it really exist – at the other end of chronological time or in a parallel domain? A consideration of temporality is essential because reconstructions are units not only *in* time but they somehow also stage it, exhibiting notions of past and present in displays of overlaps and confrontations. Occasionally, such displays are complicated enough. As we shall see, Lauro gave vanished monuments appearances inspired by projects being built, exploiting the nonexistence that the lost and future Rome for a moment shared. Reconstructing in the Baroque, then, is less about the past than about timing.

A theme that reverberates through *Baroque Antiquity* is the idea that printed reconstructions on their deepest level formulate early modern concepts of historical change, albeit not in any systematic fashion. Reconstructions recover the past in a number of ways, and some I shall define, such as “regeneration,” “pre-conversion,” and “reflection,” and others I will have to ignore. For some models of recovery belong to disciplines that this book has little room

to explore, such as the connection that might exist between printed reconstructions and the art of memory. The mnemonic systems developed since classical times, peaking in the Renaissance, reorganized the world of things and concepts in an architecture of the mind. Lauro and (in particular) Kircher's architectural contraptions, so exorbitant and full of detail, seem surreal possibly because they ultimately visualize posts along the routes of memory rather than the ones in Rome.³³

Another course I shall not follow, but barely point out, strays into literary theory. Graphic reconstructions in many respects have more in common with literature than with architecture, because they are reproducible in print and face similar challenges of interpretation: It would be as artless for Renaissance and Baroque antiquarians to re-engrave previous solutions as it would be for Petrarch to copy Virgil. Literary *imitatio* in the Renaissance, as Thomas Greene writes, was all about arriving at a novel standpoint not by the replication of an ancient source, but – in a more sophisticated manner – by the circumvention of it. A successful imitation conceals itself.³⁴ “Thus we may use another man's conceptions and the color of his style, but not his words. In the first case the resemblance is hidden deep; in the second it is glaring,” writes Petrarch in a letter to Boccaccio.³⁵ The delightfully contradictory idea of a “hidden resemblance” is not only metaphorical; it is also archaeological, inspired by the ruins that so impressed the humanist author. Not only ancient Rome but also art's imitation exists in layers.

It is tempting to resort to *imitatio* to explain Lauro and Kircher's choice not to retrace a monument's exact form, but to resemble its “content” – to retrieve a meaning hidden from plain sight. The concept of imitation, as is well known, migrated from literature to architecture and shaped the sixteenth-century discourse on architectural theory.³⁶ In the seventeenth century, it possibly also shaped the discourse of the past, inspiring reconstructions of antiquity. Neither Lauro nor Kircher refers in my knowledge to Petrarch (although Lauro mentions Boccaccio), but the concept and uses of imitation, so ingrained in Renaissance and Baroque culture, could have encouraged them to suppress the impulse to document remains and to disassociate the reconstructions from the models that inspired them. However, it would be deeply ironic that the license architects took in order to vary from ancient models caused the ancient models *themselves* to end as variations. In a discussion on printed reconstruction, therefore, literary and architectural *imitatio* points out an ambiguous course. It remains an academic reference more than it represents a strategy of recovery able to provide real answers.

In my view, the humanist debate on literary imitation shaped one important point of the seventeenth-century notion of the past. The print antiquarians we shall encounter never aimed to evoke past monuments as accurately as possible; their intention, rather, was to envision how they might have looked if they

had been built in the present. This subtle difference builds on a humanist distinction. To speak like Cicero, Erasmus had observed, was not a matter of copying words but of imagining how Cicero would have spoken if he were alive.³⁷ The fact that everything had changed since antiquity – customs, institutions, religion – had left the words indecipherable. What was the point of replicating an element exactly if the context that gave it meaning was lost? In other words, the world of the ancients, in rhetoric and in archaeology, could only be grasped as proxy. I think our antiquarians realized this and also that antiquity did not exist in the ancient world at all, but in their own, as an exotic form of the present. Francis Bacon's point that the moderns were the true ancients – because they inhabited a world that was older than it had been in Roman times – was a well-known trope and adds a final twist to this short excursion into the theory of reconstruction. If the ages advanced in the opposite direction, as Bacon seemed to suggest, a reconstruction would seem to grow "ancient" with each novel addition, becoming a true antique in the full bloom of its contemporariness.

Seventeenth-century antiquarians paraded anachronisms and provided for them a past rather than embarking on the fundamentally modern mission it was to free the past of anachronisms.

RECONSTRUCTIONS AND ALLEGORY

Imagining a ruined or vanished monument as complete implies drawing a line somewhere between documentation and conjecture. But where exactly that line goes is far from fixed and wavers with history's own shifting view on what is considered evidence. The ruin, as a key to unlock a monument's original but lost appearance, is arguably a nineteenth-century invention and outlines a very different and "archaeological" kind of past from the one that was useful, say, to a Renaissance prince or a Baroque Jesuit. The evidence that constitutes a given period's notion of antiquity is itself subjected to change. The weighing between literary and material evidence, between history and antiquarianism, constantly readjusts the image of Rome.

One may ask whether the printed reconstructions in this discussion qualify as reconstructions at all in the way they so completely overlook the evidence on the site. The term "reconstruction" is both useful and misleading: useful because the prefix "re" and the noun "construction" suggest a certain distance, and consequent recombination, across materials and across time; and misleading because the term was never used in the period. It is a modern distinction projected onto a past, which named this kind of material differently. For example, the sixteenth-century use of the term "prototype" created the impression that the monuments in antiquity were sketches of forms that a Christian posterity would realize, thus turning the original-copy relationship upside

down, a topic explored in Chapter 4. Only once, in *Antiquae Urbis Splendor's* preface, does Lauro come close to defining his practice when he speaks of the Roman ruins and his efforts to “restore them to their ancient splendor” (“restituirle nel antico splendore”). The term “restituire” hardly accounts for the erudition that resulted in the work’s best pictures, and it ineptly describes the plagiarism that resulted in its worst, but, tellingly, the term accords with ancient architectural practice: When a fire had reduced the Capitol to ashes, Emperor Vespasian rebuilt the site from scratch, or, in the Roman author Suetonius’s word, he undertook a *restitutio* (10.9).³⁸ So when Lauro embarks on a program of *restitutio* he reconstructs not only the buildings, but also the act of reconstructing, with a term that licenses a complete architectural makeshift, reinterpreted by the engraver to apply to the world of print.

The didactic mission of archaeology, however, becomes explicit with Kircher who, as we shall see in Chapter 5, said of his reconstructed Villa of Maecenas that he depicted it “not as it was, but as it could and ought to have been.” It is an extraordinary admission of a biased and deeply engaged approach to Roman architecture, as if the building stood not in the past but in a moral realm where construction was ongoing. Arguably, it is only from the mid-eighteenth century that archaeology aimed to recuperate antiquity without any moral guidance at all and hence cut through the array of literary and visual references in “scientific” recoveries of the past; this approach was exemplified by Karl Jacob Weber’s excavations and publication of the ancient towns near Vesuvius in the 1750s and 1760s, which, according to Christopher Parslow, anticipated “the scientific methodologies of modern archaeology.”³⁹ However, a reconstruction of the outward form that was not also an inward edification had no place in the practice of Lauro and Kircher.

Regardless of its shortcomings, the term “reconstruction” has its advantages. Significantly, it implies a reference in an actual historical building in contrast to, say, the antique-like *capricci* of Piranesi and Giuseppe Galli Bibiena, which were fictional through and through; the images of Lauro and Kircher might be erroneous, but they are never fantasies. There is a world of difference between the two.

A reconstruction, then, draws the contours not only of the parts of a building that remain but also of the parts that are missing. The tangible vestige anchors a reconstruction to the field of archaeology, but the imagined part connects it to a plethora of other fields – art, architecture, literature, to mention a few. Our quest therefore differs from the archaeologist’s insofar as the reference point is not the ruined architecture, but the vision of it as complete.

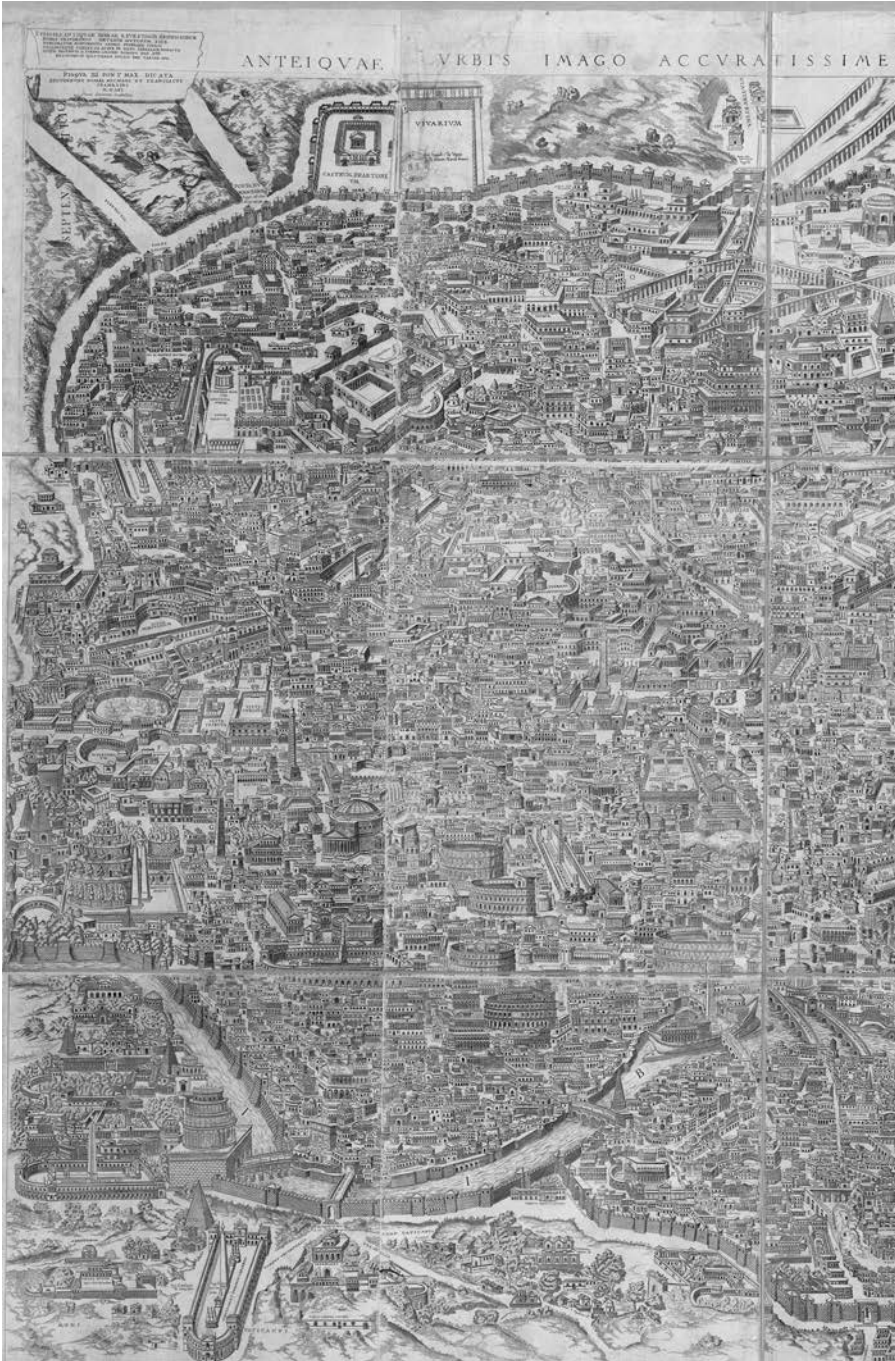
It is a principle of imagination we are after – a principle based not so much on the fragments themselves as on the sense of order that would make those fragments seem to form part of a coherent whole. Two examples may help us delimit the principle at work in seventeenth-century print antiquarianism.

With a standpoint in the late Renaissance, Ligorio's method of re-envisioning Rome's lost quarters has proved remarkably resilient and ties his reconstructive map, the *Antiquae Urbis Imago* of 1561, to Italo Gismondi's plaster model of Constantine's city began in the 1930s.⁴⁰ "I have often made use of conjecture, where the ruins, which are few, were lacking," wrote Ligorio about his own reconstructive method, thereby indicating how missing parts may be completed "by continual reference to analogous examples, continual restoration of individual works by reference to types," in Howard Burns's interpretation.⁴¹ In a fundamentally Aristotelian order of things a reference to *type* guarantees the wholeness of form also in specimens where individual traits are absent (Fig. 2). As Jessica Maier observes, Ligorio's method of reinventing the appearances of lost buildings by mixing elements from standing ones had a precedent in the process Raphael described in the letter to Leo X.⁴² I shall return to Ligorio's map in more detail, but even a sneak peek confirms the overwhelming effect of his in-fill housing. The generic production of unknowns, from known ones, outlines an early theory of reconstruction – its philosophy, to put it a bit grandly.

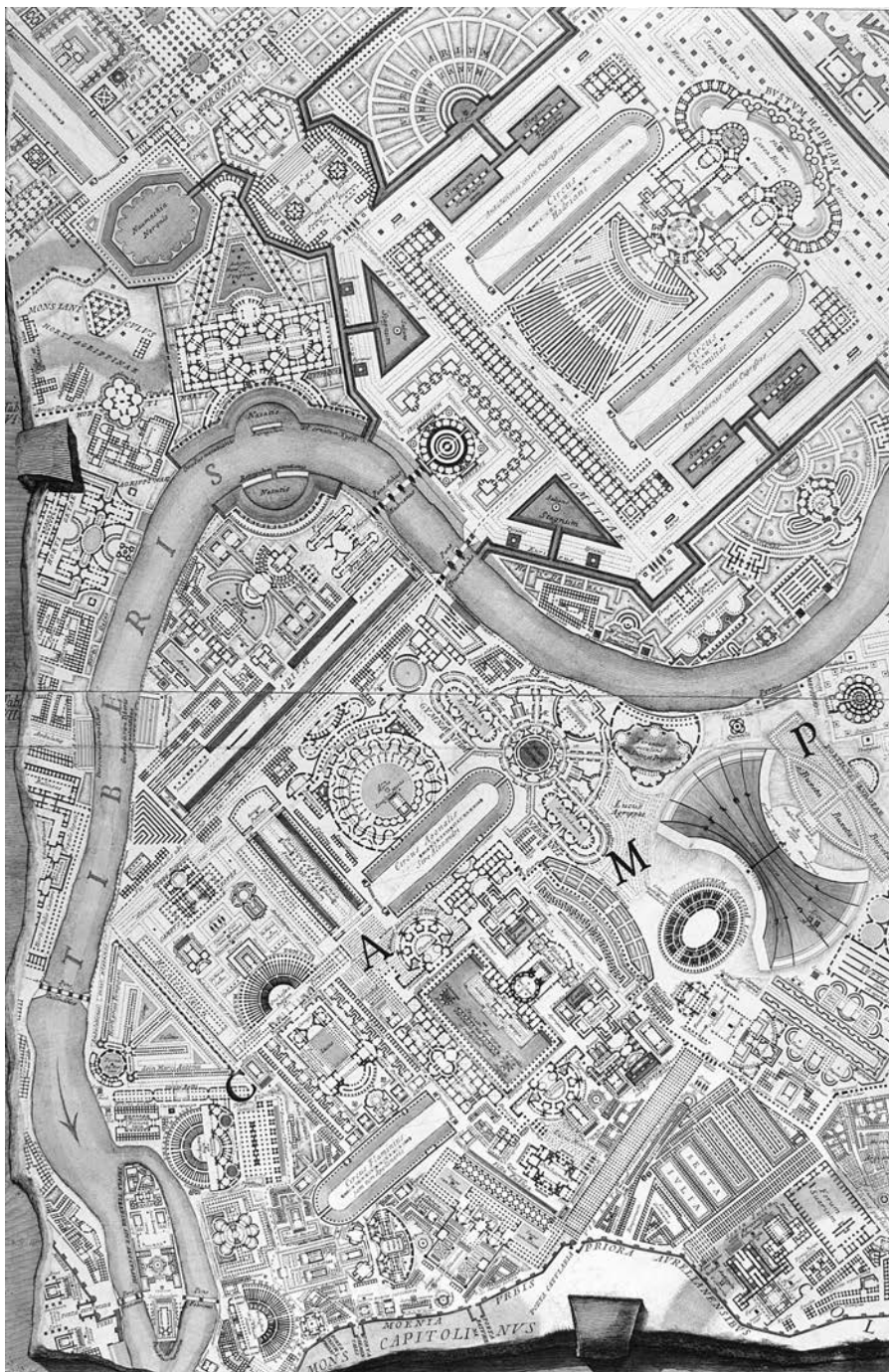
Taking a leap from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, Giovanni Battista Piranesi brings vanished Rome back to life by a mesmerizing process of abstraction in the plan of the Campo Marzio published in 1762 (Fig. 3).⁴³ This extraordinary survey reflects the Venetian etcher's idea of himself both as an archaeologist and an architect using geometry as the tool to continue the creation of the ancients – to partake in an ongoing transgression of rules that Piranesi says the Romans themselves instigated.⁴⁴ For in this fantasy plan, Piranesi subjects the vast, lost tracks of the ancient capital to strict geometric ordering; forms multiply ad infinitum, growing increasingly complex to the point where the reconstructed city manifests an abstract pattern more than an urban mass, making the plan of Campo Marzio appear to Manfredo Tafuri as a "metaphor of the machine universe."⁴⁵ Stanley Allen recognizes even more succinctly this structuring of the invisible in the Campo Marzio plan as a novel compositional language: "The whole and the parts submit to the same geometric rules", Allen states, claiming that geometry with Piranesi's reconstruction is understood for the first time as an organizing principle in architecture – a principle, however, of which Piranesi soon loses control: "The 'useless machines' of the Campo Marzio turn out to be self-perpetuating."⁴⁶

So, from having been seen as the "Rembrandt of architecture" by the early print historians writing around 1900, I would say Piranesi became a "Newton of archaeology" in the reinterpretations of Tafuri and others, a century later.⁴⁷

As these two examples show, reconstructions arise as much from the lacunae in archaeology as from its remnants. Whether the principle of invention is generic (Ligorio) or geometrical (Piranesi), it reflects a given time and culture's



2. Pirro Ligorio, *Anteiovae Urbis Imago* (Venice, 1561), detail. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, GE-C-2288.



3. Giovanni Battista Piranesi, plan of the ancient Campo Marzio, *Campo Marzio* (Rome, 1762), detail. Istituto Centrale per la Grafica, Rome, FC37700. Courtesy of the Ministero dei Beni e delle Attività Culturali e del Turismo.

way of thinking – the evidence behind the evidence. The search for an order of composition particular to the seventeenth century is limited by the fact that the reconstructions of Lauro, Kircher, and others reorder neither real fragments nor abstracted shapes, but mostly printed motifs. In this book I wish to demonstrate how meaning is distilled from the selection and recombination of various sources, resulting in the layering of a monument as a multiple message. A flawed archaeology is redeemed by artful reconstructions that let ancient Rome slip into many different disciplines, all at once.

The principle that governs the reproduction of antiques, or rather the production of non-antiques, does in my view entail an addition of *meaning* inspired by allegories and related printed genres such as emblems, thesis prints, and frontispieces. These genres used familiar objects as props to visualize concepts, or “truths,” that belonged to the realm of wisdom and learning and escaped direct sensory verification. The reconstructions that might compare to this level of sophistication are admittedly few but significant, because they embody new and highly advanced combinations that tie the Baroque, both as period and a concept, to antiquity in a hitherto uncharted manner. Lauro’s two temples, presented in Chapters 3 and 4, and Kircher’s two Tiburtine villas, presented in Chapters 5 and 6, are among those highly complex reconstructions. The attempt to unravel that complexity certainly invites more than one conclusion. Caroline van Eck, for example, points out that in the seventeenth century architectural history was interpreted analogically, as a cycle of recurring forms.⁴⁸ Yet, a scheme of repetition is a model that gives little room for the emulation and redemption that Lauro and Kircher invest in the process of reconstructing. They *reinvent* the past more than they measure out forms to counterbalance it in another eon, which an analogy implies. Their elaborate reconstructions were meant to transcend any material or historical evidence as such in the effort to disclose a basically spiritual dimension.

The four main examples in this book *pretend* to represent historical monuments, but at scrutiny dissolve into architectural veneers devised to expose a deeper meaning. For beyond the display of antique elements loom “eternal” truths that use that display precisely to become manifest. The allegory, according to Walter Benjamin, is a parasite on the world of things in terms that are comparable. In *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, first published in 1928, Benjamin analyzes the dramatic genre *Trauerspiel* and in the process develops his idea of allegory in the Baroque. It is a difficult text, but it conveys something important about ancient monuments and their meaning. Benjamin makes an explicit point about ruins, which, as crumbled remnants, evoke the idea of time’s passage, even death. This is the set-up of an allegory. A profound insight that takes hold of people’s minds and rearranges their conception of reality, as if reality were an assembly of parts, is what Benjamin holds to be the essence of the allegorical. An allegory is a recombination in which the elements are so

loosely joined that a mighty, inscrutable truth might be glimpsed through its cracks. The value of an edifice that is reassembled, compared to one that simply retains its pristine unity, lies precisely in its artful remaking, because only thus can it be construed as a poignant message. The notion of the Baroque man of genius, says Benjamin, is one who mastered this *ars invendi*, “a man that could manipulate the models.”⁴⁹

Taking this as a point of departure, lost Rome in the seventeenth century is restored to an order that is neither typological nor geometrical – but allegorical. If allegory successfully links to print antiquarianism, the vestiges would point back to a totality – a myth, a concept – that itself has no physical presence but reigns boundlessly and eternal all the same. The following chapters will make clear that ancient Rome to Lauro and Kircher was an allegorical unit not yet pillaged and divided between various specialized disciplines. To them *Roma antica* symbolized above all a moral stage in man’s journey toward salvation, or toward damnation, and told of a spiritual triumph over paganism. With the remains of antiquity, or rather with the remnants of the printed representations of it, the antiquarian as an allegorist, if one were to use Benjamin’s words, places antiquity within an invented significance “and stands behind it; not in a psychological but in an ontological sense. In his hands the object becomes something different; through it he speaks of something different and for him it becomes a key to the realm of a hidden knowledge; and he revers it as the emblem of this.”⁵⁰

But an allegory cannot exist in itself. It works through a host of intermediaries, Benjamin claims, bringing with it a “court of imagery” that concretizes its elusive constitution in much simpler set-ups. These Benjamin identifies as emblems. As a printed genre, the emblem is almost as old and venerated as the reconstruction, and it emerged simultaneously with the antiquarian engravings of Salamanca and Serlio published in the 1530s. Illustrated editions of emblem books by Andrea Alciato and others co-developed with the antiquarian print, but placed its ideal reference not in the past but in the realm of moral and religion. Briefly put, the emblem captured an abstract notion in a familiar form, often an architectural one, creating a visual sign to accompany some morally poignant verse. In other words, it was a genre that condensed the allegory into concrete visual expressions and whose authors scanned the legacy of the ancients for new and captivating meanings. Not only did emblems offer actual models for the period’s print antiquarians but also the reconstructions themselves were composed emblematically in the way in which historical sites were reconceived as codes meant to be deciphered by princes and prelates alike.

A seventeenth-century figure in Rome who argued for the visual art’s special divine sanction was the artist and art theoretician Federico Zuccaro who, in *L’idea de’ pittori, scultori et architetti* published in 1607, exalted not prints in

particular, but delineation. The principal aim of the *Idea* was to secure a domain for the arts – painting, sculpture, and architecture – independent of the prevailing technical basis of art in ratios and calculation. In truth, art is independent of any measurable reality, Zuccaro claims, and he wishes to untie it from mathematics altogether. Drawing, not *scientia*, forms the basis of Zuccaro’s celebration of a subjectively based interpretation of the world. However, it would be a huge mistake to think that man in Zuccaro’s scheme is free to invent as he pleases: Actual drawing belongs to what Zuccaro calls *disegno esterno*, the title of the second part of the book. The first part, however, deals with *disegno interno*, a far more ambitious – and difficult – concept. Here, he answers the obvious question of how art, insofar as it is disconnected from sensory impressions and measurable relations, may resemble the world at all. Zuccaro insists that good architecture materializes by a far more sublime process than by imitation of tangible models. In fact, art does not entail a reproduction of the actual world at all, but a parallel manifestation sanctioned ultimately by the divine. So, what architects do is to realize an inner divine image – in Italian a *disegno* – implanted in each and every individual. Zuccaro even claims that the word *disegno* is an abbreviation of the phrase “*segno di Dio in noi*,” “the sign of God in us.”⁵¹

In this scheme, architectural delineation bears the stamp of the divine. Buildings reside in God’s mind, as if in an ethereal archive of images, accessible to the truly devout architect. Buildings, we must take it, are visions in an *inner* universe that the architect may retrieve by intense self-reflection or by spontaneous revelation and then proceed to execute in actual materials.

From one angle it requires a leap to transfer Zuccaro’s lofty ideas to the mass-produced printed reconstructions in guidebooks and popular volumes, but then again perhaps not. In the small Roman milieu Giacomo Lauro knew of Zuccaro, as we shall see, and he consulted one of his architectural drawings or possibly a frescoed version of it in Zuccaro’s own palace on the Via Gregoriana, which held the model for Lauro’s *Temple of Honor and Virtue*. But more important at this stage is Zuccaro’s conviction that the image, released from its relationship to observed reality, becomes a vehicle for divine powers. This explains how art itself may turn into expressions of Christian morality even when the subject is the art and monuments of ancient Rome. The image simply *cannot* be a faithful and exact delineation of the remains, because then the spiritual dimension would have no form in which to appear. The willfully distorted antique realizes instead the legitimate form that the monument takes when re-envisioned in a post-antique and wholly Christianized society. Reconstructing in the Counter-Reformation period was also a consecration of building types that the ancients had invented and therefore were taken over as pagan. In these terms, Zuccaro’s *Idea* offers a reference to grasp the host of underlying meanings in the reconstructive prints that run from Lauro to

Kircher and that are difficult to capture by modern methodologies. But it is also a reference with pitfalls, because Zuccaro rejected what he calls *capricci*, products of pure imagination, which overlap the reconstructive genre. All the same, this Roman-based theoretician reveals an aspect of graphic reconstructions that only Baroque Rome was able to formulate. The idea that the image – even antiquarian prints – expresses the imprint of a higher power rather than the reflection of the visible world conveys much of what antiquarianism was about throughout the seventeenth century.

From the insertion of small motifs to the reinvention of entire buildings, the seventeenth-century *imago* of restored Rome frequently hinges on moral and religious points. Signs and prefigurations of the True Faith paradoxically become a part of archaeology in a way they had not done before and would not persist after. Any study on antiquity in the Roman Baroque will soon stumble over anachronistic expressions of faith in reconstructed ancient Rome not only in graphic representations but also in narratives such as Cardinal Baronio's influential *Annales* composed in the years around 1600. A Baroque conception of history was synonymous with the unfolding of a providential plan in which the role of pagan Rome remained ambiguous. Because the city of emperors had been destroyed by a divine will, it would have to be reconstructed by the careful hand of the Christian antiquarian. Therefore monuments' potential to foretell Christian truths determined their selection and appearance. Lauro's reconstructions of lost temples in the form of existing churches, as we shall see, represent a consecration of history through the agent of archaeology. Imperial Rome itself surrenders to Christ's coming in prints that in strict terms do not reconstruct past monuments but pre-construct present ones. Whether by means of visual references or by grand historical schemes, antiquity in the Baroque is recast as a messenger of its own downfall.

The reconstruction as allegory somehow "frees" the historical monument from chronological time and casts it as an *exemplum*. To reconstruct allegorically means to disregard the scattered evidence and instead perfect the plot, so that the narrative, rather than the remnant, emerges clearly. Already Lauro understood how to use monuments as props to illustrate a grand tale that for him (and for Kircher) unfailingly ended with the triumph of the Catholic Church over heretics. The religious dimension is one good reason for us to hold onto the idea of allegory as a principle of invention in seventeenth-century paper antiquarianism, in the sense that the allegory strives toward a reconciliation of forces, toward redemption.

Again, one could side with Walter Benjamin who observed that the allegory reflects "the penchant of the Baroque for apotheosis." The longing for transcendence, he claims, counterbalanced the stinging awareness of a frail and all-too-earthly existence.⁵² A reconstruction is a type of "apotheosis" too – but of the ruin. In other words, an acute sense of time's deteriorating force

produced an urge to formulate the exact opposite, namely the permanence of the divine.

The allegory defends the printed reconstruction's propensity to err and supports a recombination that in fact does *not* imitate the original. On the contrary, the allegory endorses a reconstructive practice that in reality hijacks the fragment for a greater cause, connecting it to the realm of moral values and providential history. It allows for the existence of a lofty superstructure that, on the one hand, lends to incision the luster of a divinely delineated *disegno*, as Zuccaro would have it, and on the other hand grants the antiquarian a license to perform as a master of all arts, a role he was unable to fulfill without either relying on assistance (which we shall see Lauro did) or taking shortcuts (of which Kircher was accused).

BAROQUE ANTIQUITY

The arrival of the Pergamon Altar in Berlin in 1879, as Alina Payne argues, led quickly to a revision not only of a denounced phase in ancient art but also of a denounced phase that was more recent.⁵³ The second-century BC marble frieze of combating gods and giants demonstrated a classicism that was both dynamic and transgressive, shattering the prevailing Winckelmannian ideal of ancient art's "noble simplicity and quiet grandeur." In fact, the Pergamon Altar prompted a subdivision of antiquity into a phase that scholars named "Baroque."⁵⁴ Archaeologists and historians on antiquity were now able to observe how Greek art passed from a classical phase to a phase that was both painterly – *malerisch* – and naturalistic, prefiguring and endorsing characteristics that scholarship so far had reserved for a depraved post-Renaissance. In other words, the debates generated by the Pergamon Altar incidentally helped assert the Baroque as a style in a history that German-speaking scholars at the end of the nineteenth century were in the midst of rearranging.

The Baroque in antiquity is not the subject here. Nor is "Gothic Baroque," the "Viennese Baroque," or any displaced baroques identified in various periods and regions and charted by, for example, Robert Harbison.⁵⁵ However, the broad, unhindered export of the term points to the difficulty of containing the Baroque to a specific time and place and to the consequent ease, therefore, with which it is applied to very much else.

Of course, the term "Baroque" had been used as a label on the artistic legacy of seventeenth-century Rome long before the Pergamon Altar overwhelmed the scholarly establishment in the 1880s.⁵⁶ Probably deriving from the Portuguese name for an irregularly shaped pearl, "Baroque" was first applied to art and architecture by the French. In the *Encyclopédie Méthodique* (1788) Quatremère de Quincy defined Baroque buildings, thinking of Borromini in particular, not merely as *bizarre* but as bizarreness brought to its ulterior

stage of distortion – to its superlative state. To him, the Baroque implied a deliberate, vicious deformation of the principles of architecture, its sole merit being the “very novelty which constitutes its vice.”⁵⁷ One thing was therefore clear already from the start: The Baroque arose from no stringent principles, but was a mere outward effect.

In the history of architecture – to which reconstructions of Rome also belong – the Baroque, then, emerged not so much on its own terms as in contrast to the preceding Renaissance. The reason why architectural theory simply has bypassed the Baroque, according to Hanno-Walter Kruft, is because theory is lacking in the period itself. In contrast to the overpowering legacy left by the Renaissance, Kruft finds a void. “It is a curious fact,” he concludes, “that Italian architecture of the Early and High Baroque never received a systematic theoretical defence.”⁵⁸

Baroque architecture not only lacked theory. It also “developed without models,” Heinrich Wölfflin declared in his groundbreaking *Renaissance und Barock* (1888), thereby propagating the hard-lived idea of the Baroque more as a reaction than as a rationale.⁵⁹ Although Jacob Burckhardt in *Der Cicerone* (1855) only reluctantly had named the Baroque a style, because he did not think of it very favorably, it was Wölfflin – Burckhardt’s student – who subjected it to systematic analysis through a comparison with the Renaissance: Zeroing in on works that seemed to capture the essences of the two styles, and with a preference for architecture, Wölfflin hinged the differences between the Renaissance and Baroque on pairs of contrasting concepts, such as Renaissance “linear” (distinctly separated forms) versus Baroque “painterly” (an overall effect of blurring). Everything the Renaissance was, the Baroque was not, and vice versa. Historians on art and architecture around 1900 cultivated Renaissance reason and logic while they deposited art history’s subconscious in the category of “Baroque.” Clearly no longer merely a matter of taste, which was how Quatremère had seen it, the Roman Baroque now emerged in terms of a difficult memory or a perplexing dream. It is an interesting concurrence between scholars that play out a troubled Baroque against a lucid Renaissance and Sigmund Freud’s somewhat analogous division of the human mind into an unconscious and a conscious part. In *Entscheidung der Barockkunst in Rom* published in 1908 (and based on lecture notes) Alois Riegl claims that Baroque art – like the Renaissance – aimed at the extraordinary. But as for the Renaissance,

we understand the “extraordinary” and thus find it admirable, whereas we do not understand the extraordinary in Baroque art, because it contains a contradiction and seems unreal, it does not convince us, and thus we find it strange. The extraordinary in antique and Renaissance art seizes us, but in the Baroque we are appalled by it, and we perceive it as disturbing or as a troublesome confusion.⁶⁰

The Baroque's evasiveness – its apparent lack of content – is also what has secured its success in wider terms, beyond mere period-specific traits. For, if anything, the Baroque in its modern reinvention has triumphed as a condition, a state of mind almost, in which posterity and, in particular, the last century have seen reflected their own restlessness and aspirations. The neo-Baroque of the contemporary is not a revival of seventeenth-century aesthetics or a revival of any kind, in fact; it is simply a reading of the Baroque as an escape from rules and constraints. Seen more as an urge than an epoch, the Baroque effortlessly transcends time and place as an emblem precisely of transcendence, as a “multiple superseding of limits,” in the words of Tomaso Montanari.⁶¹

Because of its constantly changing guise “it is easy to call the Baroque inexistent,” Gilles Deleuze declared in *Le Pli* (1988), but he nevertheless identified its tremulous inner core as a continuous unfolding: “[T]he Baroque invents the infinite work or process.”⁶² The elusiveness of the Baroque gave room for Erwin Panofsky to recognize in it the birth of modern man's self-consciousness: “They [Baroque people] not only feel, but are also aware of their own feelings. While their hearts are quivering with emotion, their consciousness stands aloof and ‘knows.’”⁶³ Indeed, our own time's psychological and emotional identification with the Baroque continues to prevail in the attempts to unravel the Baroque in contemporary art, as Mieke Bal does, or to procure it as remedy against a too stringent modernism in architecture as do Robert Venturi and, more recently, Antoine Picon. Arguably, and in the final account, the Baroque is a child of our own age, (re-)invented as a corrective to modernity's insistence on rationality and progress. “The resistance of the baroque in the modern world is the resistance of a heterogenous, alien and inassimilable element, ever incomplete . . .”, writes Christine Buci-Glucksmann.⁶⁴

Whatever it denotes and regardless of the discipline that defines it, the Baroque finds its most manifest form through an accumulation of adjectives, in contrast to a Renaissance that is conspicuously characterized by nouns: Bizarre, rebellious, convoluted, and transcendent are terms frequently used to capture that apparent impulse in art and architecture (and antiquarianism?) to revolt against the order and stability of Renaissance classicism inspired by Roman antiquity. If the Renaissance indeed was cast as the rebirth of the classical ideals, the Baroque was the rioting adolescent.

“Renaissance” and “Baroque” are of course abstractions, but the dialectic between them is so ingrained in our understanding of art history that it has acquired a reality of its own – difficult to disentangle from present reevaluations. The Wölfflinian “opposites” are perhaps of more pedagogic value than historically instructive, but threaten to become directly misleading when antiquity enters the picture. The Pergamon Altar mesmerized art historians and made them see a “Baroque” in antiquity, but there was no similar havoc,

nor was much being said, about antiquity in the Baroque. The Renaissance monopoly on the antique legacy blinded scholars to the fact that this was a legacy also shared and indeed adopted by the Baroque period. The dialectic of styles that reached the height of fashion around 1900 polarized too the history that came before; antiquity itself seemed to side with the Renaissance. After Michelangelo, according to Riegl, “a general hostility toward antiquity” became the norm.⁶⁵ Indeed, the invention of printing, the development of instruments to measure remains, and sophisticated architectural projections saw ancient Rome itself evaporate within the age that resurrected it – an age of well-read, confident architects and theorists who were selective of the past and revised it if necessary. For one could argue that the Renaissance not simply uncovered antiquity but also reimagined it so completely that ancient Rome, even to this day, survives above all as a Renaissance fabrication. That is to say, distilled through centuries of classicisms and neoclassicisms, antiquity has merged with the Renaissance vision of it, codified in texts and measured out in illustrations, leaving a false but charismatic testimony of the Palladian Rome of the ancients – white, homogeneous, ordered. In the continuous propagation of ancient Rome as a proto-Renaissance, the Baroque falls outside, but – and this is important – not from antiquity itself, only from the Renaissance annexation of it. The examples in this book are few but I hope convincing enough to constitute a rediscovery of an antiquity that is specifically Baroque.

Roman antiquities were in fact far less doctrinal and orderly than Renaissance theory would have it. Antiquity had of course its own antiquity and an ensuing suite of “renaissances” unfolding throughout ancient Rome’s own thousand-year history, officially running from April 21, 752 BC, when Romulus was believed to have founded the city. The obligation to *vary* was a reminder that Vitruvius repeatedly gave his readers in the manual on building he wrote in the period of Augustus, and Roman remains themselves testify to a plethora of styles and solutions often suppressed in a history of architectural theory that headed toward an increasing abstraction of classical ideals in architecture. Nor did the Baroque always inherit the preference for the same antique models, instead searching for intricate, complex prototypes at the fringes of the established canon and, at times, also for more enigmatic ones, which invited convenient reimagining. Whereas the Renaissance deduced from ancient architecture ideal ratios and proportions – in short, theory – the Baroque combined visual elements into narratives that almost equaled text.

Wölfflin’s “Baroque without models” only *seems* so of course in comparison with the highly systematic exposition of ancient models in the writings of Alberti, Serlio, Palladio, and other Renaissance architects, theorists, commentators, and translators. With a few exceptions, the Baroque rarely mediated a dependence on antiquity in writing, because by 1600 writing no longer

communicated architecture as effectively and widely as prints. Since the mid-sixteenth century, engravings had worked their way into every branch of knowledge in the form of folios, book illustrations, pamphlets, and maps, and they arguably informed a conception of the past that was fundamentally visual. As Umberto Eco points out with regard to Kircher, he was incapable of thinking in other than images.⁶⁶ Prints, then, not only proliferated *in* the Baroque but may even contribute to give the idea of it a continuing meaning. Graphic reproduction responds to Helen Hills's call for a reconsideration of the Baroque as a notion with relevance beyond mere periodization. She coins the phrase "conceptual technology" to formulate a model to grasp the Baroque in a way "that does not simply allow retrospective understanding but actually provokes new forms of historical conceptualization and interpretation."⁶⁷ To the extent theory is something that attaches not only to texts but also to images, the Baroque may be given its "systematic theoretical defence" with a basis in print culture.

Graphic reproduction lay at the very heart of a seventeenth-century assimilation of the past. It merits a place in the period's antiquarianism, as we have seen, and constituted that underlying stratum from which a new and intensely visual culture retrieved its models. In this process, Lauro's *Antiquae Urbis Splendor* was an indispensable catalyst. It reproduced antiquities in simple archetypal forms, even signs, which could be endlessly copied and reworked, processing an architectural history that turned pictorial and reached an apex of complexity in Kircher's *Latium*. With these two, and their contemporaries, the picture book replaces the treatise in the recovery of ancient Rome. Reconstructing classical monuments meant juxtaposing bold visual units instead of fleshing out invisible rules and proportions.

Lauro, Kircher, and their milieus represent a Baroque that rejected not antiquity *per se*, but antiquity in the way that it had been formulated in the Renaissance. In their printed reconstructions ancient Rome was reactivated, or rather reinvented, as a prefigured present. It yielded "plots" that gave ongoing projects a particular resonance through a play on names, forms, and allusions, in an obvious form of flattery to patrons and authorities. Unlike an approach that could be called archaeological, the past in these examples does not exist as a layer to be "uncovered," but as an allegory to be deciphered. Antiquity supports, instructs, and furnishes contemporary life in a carefully orchestrated balance between the contemporary and an unknown past. The antique forms appeared uncannily familiar because in the final account the city they re-created was the present, not the lost, one.

History is perhaps this book's true subject. But it is a history in which one version of it is interlocked in another. For the focus is not on the Baroque period, but on how that period saw antiquity. The past's own past is a remote region indeed. To access that region demands careful historiographical probing,

with the seventeenth century as basecamp for an expedition venturing into that elusive *Roma antica* Lauro and Kircher themselves toured. What they saw, or rather *how* they saw it, are questions archaeology cannot answer because it did not yet exist and because the apparent hallucinations make sense in a domain where theology, print history, and architectural theory combine.

In and *through* printed reconstructions history performs a double maneuver: Classical Rome becomes a vehicle to make contemporary Rome seem ancient. Lauro and Kircher, as well as others, recover the past, not by a diffusion of epochs “in a single utopian whole,” as the Renaissance did according to Hubertus Günther, but by calculated loops and twists of chronologies.⁶⁸ Baroque antiquity is different from Renaissance *imitatio* and Enlightenment historicizing strategies; in seventeenth-century Rome, monuments had no meaning unless reactivated on multiple levels and in response to specific contemporary situations. Of course, “Baroque” remains a problematic term – and yet, an antiquarian approach that constructs sites from emblems and legends, anchors lost antiquity in Christian thought, and rearranges elements in strikingly modern solutions, equals in complexity and visual power the art and architecture of the period.